

THE CEACRITIC

Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of the College English Association

Vol. XIV—No. 4

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April, 1952

SECEA Experiments With Group Dynamics

The February 23 meeting of the SECEA (Fla. State Univ.), Tallahassee, brought together the critical insight of Dr. Harry Warfel, some serious thinking about literature as general education, and the warm hospitality of the FSU department.

Sarah Herndon, FSU, headed the program committee and was assisted by Edward Foster, Paul Haines, James Preu, William Randel, and Edgar Stanton. Local arrangements were managed by Dabney Adams, Olive Cross, Laura Jepsen, George Yost, with Mary Maginnis as chairman.

After luncheon, Dean Edwin R. Walker greeted SECEA genially, but included a word of thoughtful comment. "If a physicist, a biologist, a social scientist is to be appointed, you can get a reliable judgment of his qualifications. If you want a philosopher [Dean Walker is a philosopher] or anyone in literature and the humanities, you can't get a judgment because of the confusion of purposes and standards in these fields."

President Nathan C. Starr directed the brief business meeting. Max Goldberg was in fine form as he presented the recent achievements and the plans of CEA. From President Ernest E. Leisy came wired greetings and a short powerful statement. Later, small groups met to consider "The Florida State Humanities Plan" and "More about Linguistics."

Lift Up Our Eyes

The after-dinner affair, President Starr presiding, moved through music and the humorous greeting of FSU President Doak Campbell to its chief subject, Dr. Harry Warfel of the University of Florida on "What's Wrong with the Novel?" The charges against the contemporary American novel, he said, are dull plots, sameness of material, ugliness for the sake of ugliness, and lack of understanding of what the reader wants. The novel has inherited the place of the epic poem and must tell a good story of more than temporary significance; it must reflect the mind questing for answers to fundamental human problems. American life, Dr. Warfel believes, is much healthier, much more resolute than the life pictured in the novel.

Sweaty Business

The sweaty business of the day was a conference on Literature as General Education, continuing the subject of the 1951 Georgia Tech meeting and bringing together all of the 75 members attending. The first session, 9:15 to 11 President Starr spoke briefly of the situation of our sophomore courses in literature; Paul Haines opened up four areas which might be considered; the group voted to discuss the student and the aims of the course; Edward Foster outlined plans for the second and third sessions. Then the general meeting disbanded, and the pre-arranged small groups went off

to their rooms. They were assisted by "resource men," who joined them for short periods.

When the general meeting began at 2:30, the correlated results of the small-group discussions were on the blackboard. The aims for literature as general education should be first, knowledge and understanding for moral growth; second, skill in reading, in expression, in criticism; third, enjoyment and aesthetic experience. The rankings by the groups were reflected by a system of weights used in the summarizing step. The crude phrasing is unfair to the more closely worded statements of the group reports, but it does at least label three real and distinguishable aims.

Knowledge & Understanding

Then nearly two hours of discussion. Did we wish to accept "moral" growth as an aim? Calvin S. Brown objected to the popular understanding of that term "moral." Nathan Starr suggested "spiritual," and this term won majority support. The chairman remarked that the strongly religious denotation would seem to suggest that every member of a department could be obliged to teach certain works which are appealing as "understanding" only to the orthodox Christian. The group tried other alternatives; in quick straw-votes neither "values" nor "wisdom" won a majority. It was decided to accept "knowledge and understanding" of the original statement, leaving the tricky question—of what?—and other difficult related queries for later exploration.

Dulce et Utile

Prof. Reaver spoke of the need for considering the work of literature as a whole and the reading of it as a whole process. The group accepted this view by voting to consider "enjoyment," "understanding," "skill" in this order as outcomes of a single process. "Skill" as a major outcome, was eliminated. Thus the group was left with "enjoyment" and "understanding" as major aims, with a slight majority favoring "understanding" for heavier emphasis. Horace had said "dulce et utile," not too bad for an oldtimer.

Lower the Sights?

Prof. Herndon reported on group comments concerning the student. Little had been written on this painful subject, but there was one shattering suggestion that the basic course be planned to bring enjoyment and understanding to the "C" student. We were too tired to give that one the consideration which it deserves.

The meeting closed with decisions to send notes on the conference to members, to collect titles of "great teaching pieces," to obtain a show of opinion on the conference procedure. The cards turned in showed two out of three approving; 32 of the 75 present at the morning session were reporting at the close.

1952 CEA INSTITUTE Amherst, June 12-13 University of Massachusetts

General Chairman: Robert T. Fitzhugh (Brooklyn)

The 1952 CEA Institute will explore the problem "How may we strengthen the college curriculum in English, within the framework of liberal and general education, so as to give English majors more effective preparation for executive careers in business and industry?" Attention will be given not only to the needs of such executives in the way of job competence but also in the arts of human relationships and civic responsibility. Methods of systematic liaison between college English departments and business executives will be explored.

Representatives of business and industry will join with university administrators and college English teachers in attempting to solve the central problem posed for the Institute. There will be general and workshop sessions. Ample opportunity will be provided for the valuable by-products resulting from informal, personal talk outside the sessions themselves.

This is the tentative schedule (members will be lodged at Hamlin House; meetings will be held at Skinner Hall): Registration, 10-11 a.m., Thursday, June 12, 11 a.m., Skinner Auditorium, General Session, followed by luncheon. 2-5 p.m., discussion groups in various rooms of Skinner Hall. 6:30 Banquet at the Lord Jeffery Inn. Friday, June 13. 9 a.m. second round of discussion group meetings. 11 a.m. third round of discussion group meetings. 12:30 Luncheon. 2 p.m. Concluding General Session. Institute to be concluded by 5 p.m.

The Institute proceedings will be published and widely circulated.

The estimated cost of registration, board and room, for the two-day Institute is \$20.00.

The Institute is not limited to members of the College English Association and its regional affiliates. All interested are cordially invited to attend as Institute members.

Skill and Artistry in Planning

Our members took away from Tallahassee a consensus of judgment as to the aims of the general course and also descriptions, collected in advance by Prof. Herndon, of fourteen specific courses given in the region. At a later meeting of officers, it was decided to continue study of the general program throughout the year. Perhaps the problem is to close the gap between broad aims and the actual experience of the student as he reads the works which we choose for him.

Are the leaders of SECEA striking toward a single "perfect course" to be somehow forced upon all of the one hundred departments of the region? Perish every part of that thought. They know

President Ralph Van Meter, Dean William L. Machmer, Dean Frank Prentice Rand (Liberal Arts), Dean George Marston (Engineering) have warmly endorsed the Institute.

"I am bringing the matter of the Institute to the attention of our deans of Business Administration and Engineering, also the man who heads Business English and his colleagues..."

HARRY WARSEL, FSU

"There is a close connection in my mind between the CCCC conference and the CEA Institute... Although it was not the sole emphasis, a sizeable place was given to 'What Employers Expect from College Courses in Composition and Communication'... I should rather like to come... if only to set your group back on its ears with a 'Functional Approach to Communication'... For the particular emphasis you wish to give the Institute, I shall just jot down on a separate sheet some suggested topics and names."

STRANG LAWSON, Colgate

"Your plans for an institute almost overwhelm me, but I am really delighted to see that I have stimulated so much activity... I will do anything I can to help out."

CLYDE E. HENSON
Michigan State

"I will send a copy of your letter to The University of Nebraska Deans of Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Business Administration, Law, Agriculture, Student Affairs (in charge of placements), and to the State Department of Instruction. I will prepare a brief statement about the Institute for the *Bill Board*, the weekly bulletin which goes to all members of the University faculty... You have stated the problem well..."

MAMIE J. MEREDITH
Univ. of Nebraska

Further information from: Dr. Maxwell H. Goldberg, Director, 1952 CEA Institute, 11 Old Chapel, Univ. of Mass., Amherst, Mass.

that "a course is right only when it is richly rewarding to the students and the instructors of the individual college." They suspect that "rewarding everyone sometimes involves several general courses given by a single department." Yet, they believe, "there is such a thing as skill and artistry in choosing titles as we make and remake courses, these qualities have partly atrophied because of over-reliance upon standard survey anthologies." Getting, respecting, using the ideas of their members, they are "trying to recover skill and artistry in planning." They believe that the resources of literature are boundless and that they can be used by the college teacher of English.

R. R.

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SO CLEAR IN HIS GREAT
OFFICE

For the full story behind the history-making April *CEA Critic* supplement, we must go back at least two years—to that Yale meeting of the NECEA which marked the beginning of a new era in CEA-MLA relations. In a formal session, William Riley Parker brought MLA greetings to the conference, and said, in part: "I am glad that CEA emphasizes one thing—teaching, while MLA stresses another—research. It is sheer folly to argue about which is the more important—teaching or research. Both are important and mutually interdependent." He predicted that MLA would increase its usefulness as an overall agency of professional coordination and cooperation. Informally, Bill later added: "Let's not leave this on the level of general sentiments. What, specifically, can we do?"

Since then, for CEA, the list of specifics has become sizeable. Bill Parker, John Fisher, and others of the MLA secretariat have

given excellent cooperation in arrangements for the national CEA meetings. So have local MLA committees in New York and Detroit. Too, CEA has worked out very satisfactory relations with two regional MLA groups—RMMLA and SAMLA. In New England and other areas, MLA leaders have been generous in the time and effort they have devoted to CEA programs; and their counsel has been invaluable.

Bill Parker himself has given his moral support and his personal endorsement to our CEA field trips on behalf of the dispossessed among our colleagues—our self-styled "Oakies in mortarboards"; and he has talked more than once of ways of providing us with more time and larger resources to extend our "admirable doings."

Conversely, it was a CEA national president and former executive secretary—Bob Fitzhugh—who served as press relations officer to the 1950 annual MLA sessions; and a glance at the roster of national CEA officers and directors will reveal a number of names well-known for service in MLA.

The sharp but essentially good-natured exchange between Ed Foster and Bill Parker in the editorial columns of *The Critic* (Jan. and Feb.) is indicative of the CEA-MLA spirit of give-and-take now generally prevailing. Ed Foster unhesitatingly functioned as traditional CEA gadfly. *The Critic* itself gladly gave space to Bill's witty retort, which likewise pulled no punches; and it printed Bill's citation of MLA addresses urging scholarship to become vital, relevant, and available to the student and the general public.

And it was in *The CEA Critic* that Bill Parker's philosophic and statesmanlike declaration appeared: "MLA, long aware of the relations of scholarship to teaching, does intend to spell out the implications of such truths as it can grasp in this confused world where a primary interest in one thing is so often construed as lack of interest in anything else."

The combined PMLA reprint which is this month's *Critic* supplement is proof-positive of the earnestness of this intention. In themselves, the two reprinted addresses (Stanley Pargellis' "Double or Quits" and Warner G. Rice's "Our Ph.D.s—Where Do They Go from Here?") close in on the problems, respectively, of making the fruits of scholarship at once more significant intrinsically and more attractively available to the layman, and of making graduate study more relevant to teaching.

In furnishing this reprint to all CEA members, Bill Parker has further demonstrated the strength of his protest against the fallacious notion that primary interest in one thing necessitates lack of interest in anything else; and the degree of his commitment to the both-and ideal of the humanist who is at once scholar and teacher.

This Parker hath been so clear in his great office he makes us hope that, if for no other reason than pride in our own CEA, we will respond with like amplitude of mind. In our primary interest in college teaching, we must not

A Critic Scoop?

On a Saturday afternoon in late November, we were chatting with Dr. Benjamin Fine in his *Times* Annex office. We were swinging homeward from one of our field trips to spot-check damage done by current dislocations, and to picture the outlook.

When we stated that English, history, and other humanistic and liberal studies had been hardest hit, the *Times* education editor registered. He looked at us sharply and said (not his precise words): There's an idea for an article. We could write around to the colleges and find out what's happening with the liberal arts.

How much of a drop in student enrolment in the liberal arts, compared with that in other fields? What has been the effect on liberal arts teachers?

Weeks went by without any signs. Finally, when our patience was almost exhausted, it appeared—a front-page article, in the Sunday *Times* for March 9. It ran to about fifty-six inches and spilled over on to page 66. Its head: "Colleges Shift from the Arts as Students Call for Science."

The following passages caught our eye:

"Some institutions report they will be forced to dismiss 20 to 30 per cent of their instructors. A study of these figures indicates the most drastic cuts will be in the humanities and liberal arts..."

"College authorities report that while they can retain all their chemistry, physics and applied science professors, they must reduce the rolls of full-time professors of English, foreign languages, and the humanities. Indeed, the fields of foreign languages, English, and history seem to be hardest hit."

In one of our own field reports ("Where Do We Go From Here?"), we had written, for the December *Critic*:

"In terms of displaced college teachers, the humanities have been hardest hit, and, among them, English has had the worst of it... American higher education is living on the edge of a volcano, which may erupt at any moment, with devastating effects on student enrollment and teaching personnel. The humanities are in an especially exposed situation."

suffer a lack of interest in the research so strongly emphasized by MLA. Over the quickening stream of humane learning, a new bridge is being built between teaching and research. It must have a firm foundation at each end. By being members of CEA and MLA, many of us are helping to insure this twofold firm anchorage. MLA-CEA cooperation in the current *Critic* supplement will result, we hope, in many more MLA members among our CEA ranks. We thus strengthen both ends of our professional span.

(Address MLA membership applications to: William Riley Parker, executive secretary, Modern Language Association of America, 100 Washington Square East, New York 3, New York.)

Comment

"...Henson's article on placing English majors. We need to do a lot more of just that kind of missionary work."

JOSEPH JONES
Univ. of Texas

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CEA REGIONAL Greater NY CEA

Spring Meeting, Hunter College, 695 Park Ave., (at 69th St.), NYC, 8 p.m. sharp (business meeting at 7:15). Friday, May 9.

Panel Discussion: "What Kind of Freshman English Course Shall We Teach?"

Participants: Aileen Traver Kitchen (Columbia, co-author with Charles C. Fries, "Preface on Grammar" in the Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary); "The Place of Modern Linguistics and Grammar". S. F. Johnson (NYU, Ass't Sec'y MLA); "The Place of Literature". Paul Kaczander (Assoc. Producer, Walt Framer Productions TV, "Strike It Rich", "The Big Pay-Off"; lecturer in communication, evening division, Pace College); "The Place of Mass Media".

Moderator: Maxwell H. Goldberg

April

Fifth Edition of

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The Committee on the Language Program, ACLS, will present "New Fields of Employment for English Teachers". A short talk followed by a question period.

All college English teachers and others interested are cordially invited.

Executive Committee: Carl Leffevre, Pace College; Thomas O. Mabbott, Hunter; Haskell Block, Queens.

NECEA

Spring Meeting: May 3, Trinity College, Hartford. Ralph Williams (Trinity), program chairman. Registration: 10:30-11:00, Chem. Bldg. Lobby. Business session: 11:00-11:15, Pres. Norman Holmes Pearson presiding. Greetings by Acting President Arthur Hughes, of Trinity.

11:15-12:30 William Carlos Williams: Readings and comments.

1:00 Lunch. 2:00-3:00 Campus tour. 3:00-4:00 Group meetings, first series. 4:00-5:00 Group meetings, second series. 5:00 Tea. 6:30 Dinner, followed by program.

Ten group meetings in all. Among them: Teaching Homer—leader, Fred Gwynn (Carnegie Intern in General Education, Yale). The Teacher Reads Poetry Aloud—leader, Thomas Parkinson (Wesleyan). Intercollegiate Cooperation in the Classroom e.g. in Teaching Henry James—leaders, Harry Moore (Babson), Seymour Betsky (Wellesley). Teaching Robert Frost—leader, William G. O'Donnell (Univ. of Mass.).

Frank Norvish and his Northeastern Recorder Sextet will present a program of Elizabethan music.

Penn CEA

Spring Meeting: Sat., Apr. 19, Franklin & Marshall, Lancaster.

All college English teachers are cordially invited to attend.

Program chairman (source of detailed information): Kenneth E. Longsdorf, Dept. of English, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa.

Program:

10:00 a.m. Registration (Fackenthal Library, F and M).

10:30 a.m. Morning Session (Anspach Room, Fackenthal Library). "A Word of Welcome", Ray Adams (Head, Dept. of English, F and M). "What Are the Responsibilities of an English Department?", a panel discussion; participants: Ernest Earnest (Temple), Wayne C. Booth and John Ashmead (Haverford), Nelson Francis (F and M).

12:30 p.m. Luncheon Session (John Wright Room, Hotel Brunswick), N. Queen and Chestnut Sts.). Speaker: Ray Armstrong (Lehigh), "Can Undergraduates Evaluate Their Teachers?" Chairman: William Watt (Lafayette).

2:00 p.m. Afternoon Session (Hotel Brunswick). Speaker: Stephen Whicher (Swarthmore), "Strike or Lock-Out? A Case History in the Problem of Non-Cumulation between Modern Poet and Modern Reader". Chairman: Perry Kendig (Muhlenberg).

3:15 p.m. Business Session. Election of officers for 1952-53.

Registration Fee \$2.25 (\$1.75 for the luncheon, the rest for expenses), payable when registering at F and M.

Mich. CEA

Spring Meeting, Mich. State, E. Lansing. Sat., May 10, with program planned as follows: 9:45, re-

SECEA

Your visit with the Southeastern College English Association gave to all of us such a sense of unity with the national association and of kinship with the other regional groups that we feel a debt of gratitude to you and to the College English Association, which generously made your visit possible.

I wish I could tell every present and future member of our regional group the importance of belonging to the national association. I see the problem this way. As members of a regional group we will find it difficult to achieve a sense of unity and continuity unless we attend the regional meeting—our only unifying action. As the meeting place is moved from one area to another in our large region we shall find a varying membership. I hope to meet always a number of the faithful, but I know that the problem of missing classes and traveling several hundred miles will mean that many of us will attend only when the meeting is within a hundred miles.

Because we have no publication to hold us together and because we have no relations with groups in our neighboring states, I think it vital to our health and growth that you through *The Critic* keep us aware of what our regional groups are doing and thinking.

In stressing the value of membership in CEA as a means of keeping us united as a regional group, the national meetings have been stimulating, and *The Critic* alive and as useful as anything a teacher can find. But I want you to know your importance to the regional groups and to engage in a campaign to make every regional member a national member as well.

JACK WALKER
Georgia Tech.

gistration; 10, Opportunities in Business and Industry for Non-Teaching Majors; 11, Freshman English and General Educ.; 12, Lunch, with after-topic, What Should MCEA Be Doing?; 1:30, Panel on After the Freshmen, What Then?, with a member on each of three divisions, The Unready (linguistic area in Program Letter sense), The Unwilling (spiritual values), and The Unrequired (teaching non-majors at various levels, such as extension work, maybe, and radio work.

CARSON HAMILTON

Middle Atlantic CEA

Spring Meeting, May 3, Univ. of Maryland, College Park. Pres. Carl Bode (Maryland). National CEA directors Thomas Marshall and Bruce Dearing are cooperating. Regional secretary - treasurer, Joseph Hendren (Western Maryland).

Indiana CEA

Sixteenth annual conference: Hanover College, Fri.-Sat., May 16-17. Program chairman, Richard Crowder (Purdue). (For program see March Critic, p. 8.)

Chicago CEA

Annual meeting, spring. Sam Workman (Illinois Tech) setting up program.

Calif. CEA

Spring Meeting. Clarence Sandelin (L. A. State), president. Edward Coulson (Santa Monica College and UCLA), vice pres.; Ruth Newby (Redlands U.) sec'y-treas.

NYCEA

Spring Meeting, Univ. of Rochester, April 5. George Nesbitt (Hamilton) elected president; William Beauchamp (Genesee State Teachers College), vice president.

Latest Watticism

Reported by F. Leighton Peters (Cedar Crest). At a recent meeting of Lafayette alumni someone asked Bill Watt why undergraduates were compelled to take so many courses in English. Bill's reply: "In order to teach them a language other than their own."

Ideas for Writing

Readings for
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Kenneth L. Knickerbocker
University of Tennessee

Based on the theory that any student paper undisturbed by an idea need not have been written, this book is designed to stimulate thinking. Poetry as well as prose is treated as idea. The 108 provocative selections were chosen as the best examples of writing on the themes most often used in student papers and are grouped under 28 specific ideas. The book is valuable for courses in public speaking and communications as well as for composition classes.

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Bulletin Board

CEA members who have not received questionnaires for the National Registration: The Humanities and the Social Sciences should write for copies to National Registration, American Council of Learned Societies, 1219 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

This is the first time teachers of English are entered upon a national roster of human resources. Now our field has been recognized as similar in importance to the status hitherto assigned to the sciences.

In this connection it should be mentioned that CEA (*The News Letter*, March, 1943, p. 2, col. 4) was the solitary national organization in the fields of the humanities and social sciences which protested against the omission of

English teachers in the compilation of the National Roster in World War II.

HARRY R. WARPEL
Univ. of Florida

University of Notre Dame Writers' Conference: June 23-28, with workshops in Poetry, Fiction and the Teaching of Creative Writing, the last an extremely popular innovation last year among writers' conferences. The staff will consist of Karl Shapiro, Frank Luther Mott, Betty Fennin, John T. Frederick, Richard Sullivan, and John Frederick Nims.

Louis Hasley, director, Box 9, Notre Dame, Indiana.

New York State English Council. Annual Conference, May 2-3. Syracuse Hotel, Syracuse. Main Speakers: Lennox Grey (Columbia T.C.); Lou La Brant (NYU); Harold B. Anderson (Chicago). Luncheon speaker, Robert P. Tristram Coffin. College section English panels: Communication Skills (Wright Thomas, Cortland State Teachers College, chmn.); Training High School English Teachers (William T. Beauchamp, Genesee State Teachers College, chmn.) Strang Lawson reminds NYCEA members that such joint meetings provide one of the best ways for them to find out what is going on in high school English and why.

School of Modern Critical Studies. Univ. of Vt. Burlington, Je. 16-27. Staff: R. P. Blackmur, Malcolm Cowley, Elizabeth Drew, Arthur Mizener, Norman Holmes Pearson, Mark Schorer, Allen Tate. Coordinator: John W. Aldridge, who will furnish illustrated brochure and application blank on request.

.. "Literary Pilgrimage to Europe", Texas Christian Univ. (Fort Worth), conducted by T. C. Crenshaw, Chairman, Dept. of English. July 15-Sept. 13, 1952. All expense tour—61 days—\$1,015.00. Under management American Travel Co. New York 36, N. Y.



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ATTACKS ON LLOYD: "POISONOUS"

I am perfectly willing to let Dr. Lloyd defend the cause of linguistics as an approach to the teaching of composition, for he can do it almost as well as anyone, but when I see the rather poisonous attacks on him (p. 4 of the March *CEA Critic*), I want to get up and start slashing away with him. The regretful conclusion I must draw from the letters from Athens, West Virginia and Alamosa, Colorado is that those places are so far off the beaten track that the books of Fries, Hall, and Pooley (to mention only three) have never penetrated those areas. How anyone can ignore the recent studies in linguistics when they teach composition is beyond me.

It seems obvious that those who attack linguistics are making rather dangerous assumptions: i.e., that "anything goes" and that linguistics are against a dignified language. I think the first assumption comes from feeling that if "standards" are relaxed the language will disintegrate. But the only way language can disintegrate will be from lack of use, and as long as language is needed to communicate, people will stick to reasonably uniform methods of expression. They will not stick to uniformity, however, just because a rule says they must; they will stick because they have to if they are to be understood.

Those who feel that relaxing "standards" will cause the language to lose dignity believe that, somehow, words have dignity in themselves. In speech, of course, this is not true because tone of voice does more than anything else to bring dignity to one's expression. In writing it is almost the same. The language of a common laborer can be beautiful and dignified when, for example, he writes, under great stress, to the governor to pardon his son. In other words, the context of the situation is what makes written language dignified, even though the grammar, by absolute standards, may be deplorable.

It is true that Lloyd makes no

friends by calling anyone who goes by "standards" a snob or slob, but his method of attack by "an uncommonly facile pen" may drive many from the sanctuary of standards to the linguistic market place where some of us are trying to teach not standards but students.

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